

victims, families, communities and the Nation. These violent acts come on the heels of the July 4 shooting spree in Illinois and Indiana, and the burning of three synagogues in northern California.

Congress has been far too slow in responding to the hate crimes that continue to threaten our communities all across America. Week after week we hear horror stories of murderers attacking innocent people because they are, or are perceived, to be members of a certain community, because they are of a particular ethnic group, or thought to be of a particular ethnic group, or race or color or creed or sexual orientation. These hate crimes devastate families and local communities and they also send a chill down the backs of everyone else that belongs to the same group.

Remember, hate crimes are especially odious because they victimize more than just the individual victim, they also are acts of terrorism directed against an entire class of citizens. When a hate crime is committed, it sends a message to every member of the targeted group that they risk their lives simply by being a member of a targeted group. No American should have to be afraid to live in any community because they are threatened with violence because of who they are.

We should instruct the conferees to accede to one version of the Senate language, to agree to add gender and disability and sexual orientation to the Federal hate crimes law. There is a necessity to do this in order so that we can give help to States that have their own hate crimes laws but need Federal assistance in investigating crimes.

The Senate has already passed the Hate Crimes Prevention Act as an amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary appropriations bill which is now in the conference committee. Over the summer, I organized a group of 62 other Members of the House, both Republicans and Democrats, to join together and urge the conferees to include the Hate Crimes Prevention Act in the final appropriations bill. I hope we are successful and that we can pass meaningful reform this fall. It is certainly within our grasp, but we need all the help we can get to urge other Members of the House and of the Senate to include this vital legislation, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, in the final version of the appropriations bill.

We must all redouble our efforts to pass sensible hate crimes prevention legislation this year. We must continue our fight to protect American families from violent bigotry and from vicious acts of hatred. Our constituents and the citizens of this great country expect no less of us.

#### IN SUPPORT OF HATE CRIMES PREVENTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today and speak in favor of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999 which is cosponsored by myself and 184 of my colleagues in this House.

Just a few weeks ago, our country was shocked when a gunman entered a Jewish community center in Los Angeles, shooting at innocent children. His intent, and I quote, "sending a message by killing Jews." What kind of message was he sending? A message of hatred.

One year ago yesterday, in Laramie, Wyoming, a young man named Matthew Shepard was killed. The reason? Because he was gay.

In Jasper, Texas, a man was murdered and dragged through the streets because he was an African-American.

All of these incidents are hate crimes. They do not just affect the group that was killed, they affect each and every one of us.

This is especially troubling to me because of the rash of anti-immigrant billboards and posters in my district of late which falsely blame immigrants for all of society's problems. Having spent my entire life in Queens County in New York, I recognize the problems faced on a daily basis by minorities who strive to eliminate any form of discrimination still present in our society. Unfortunately, the billboards of late only tell that discrimination is alive and well.

I believe the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999 is a constructive and measured response to a problem that continues to plague our Nation. Violence motivated by prejudice. This legislation is also needed because many States lack comprehensive hate crime laws.

I understand there are some people who believe that hate should not be an issue when prosecuting a crime. They say our laws already punish the criminal act and that our laws are strong enough as is. I answer with the most recent figures from 1997, when 8,049 hate crimes were reported in the United States, 8,049 crimes, because of hate. According to the FBI, hate crimes are underreported. So the actual figure is much, much higher.

I say to my colleagues, penalties for committing a murder are increased if the murder happens during the commission of a crime. Murdering a police officer is considered first degree murder, even if there was no premeditation. Committing armed robbery carries a higher punishment than petty larceny. There are degrees to crimes. Local governments and State governments and the Federal Government recognize that. And committing a crime against someone because of their

race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity or other group should warrant a different penalty. These crimes are designed to send a message, "We don't like your kind and here is what we're going to do about it." So why can we not punish crimes motivated by hate differently than other crimes?

Mr. Speaker, this legislation does not punish free speech as some have contended. Nowhere does it say you cannot hold a certain political belief or view or a particular philosophy. What it does say is that if you commit a violent act because of those beliefs, you will be punished and punished differently.

Hate crime laws are also constitutional. The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in Wisconsin v. Mitchell unanimously upheld a Wisconsin statute which gave enhanced sentences to a defendant who intentionally selects a victim because of the person's race, religion, color, disability, sexual orientation, sex or nation of origin.

I believe we ought to stand up as a Congress and as a country to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act to make our laws tougher for the people who carry out these heinous crimes.

The Senate has already included it as part of the fiscal year 2000 Commerce-Justice-State appropriations bill. I would urge the House conferees to recede to the Senate on this section. At the very least, H.R. 1082 should be brought to the House floor for consideration. We must end the hate that is permeating our society.

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#### PERIODIC REPORT ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS PAYMENTS PURSUANT TO TREASURY DEPARTMENT SPECIFIC LICENSES—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

As required by section 1705(e)(6) of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, 22 U.S.C. 6004(e)(6), as amended by section 102(g) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, Public Law 104-114, 110 Stat. 785, I transmit herewith a semiannual report "detailing payments made to Cuba . . . as a result of the provision of telecommunications services" pursuant to Department of the Treasury specific licenses.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, October 13, 1999.